



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΙΕΡΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ

October 7, 2020

Beloved Stewards and Parishioners of Annunciation,

The importance of gathering in God's House is an essential expression of our faith in Him. Our Faith teaches that the Church is the "Ark of Salvation", where Christ Himself said: *"I will build My Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it..."* (Matthew 16:18). It is within the Church that we are embraced and nurtured in living Christ-centered lives. St. Hilarion beautifully wrote: *"The Church is like a ship, outside of which it is impossible to understand the Word of God."*

The spread of Covid-19 has raised our attention and concern about the welfare of our society. Every aspect of our lives is affected by the pandemic. This includes our ability to be present at Church.

With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and with accordance with NY State laws, our beloved Annunciation Church is open for worship with a limited number of attendees, inclusive of clergy and staff. **Currently we are allowing 33 % of our maximum capacity (133 people).** Orthros begins at 8:45 a.m. and Divine Liturgy begins at 10:00 a.m. **We strongly encourage all worshipers to arrive by 10:20 a.m.** Please check our service schedule for additional Feastday worship opportunities.

Annunciation Church is re-opened under the following MANDATES and for the health of all. NO EXCEPTIONS can be made. For the protection and safety of parishioners, our church is following government laws and recommended protocols. It is important that we support one another as one community with the shared priority of the safety and well-being of our parishioners.

Please share this information with your extended family who may not receive this email.

1. Those with any signs or symptoms of cold or flu (whether it is COVID or not) MUST stay home, as should those who have come into contact with COVID-positive persons within the last two weeks. Those who are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (65 years or older, live in a long-term care facility, underlying medical conditions) are strongly suggested not to come to church and should participate in services online.
2. By voluntarily entering our church facility, you affirm that you are not currently ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms; you acknowledge that while safety measures are being taken by the church, it cannot guarantee the safety of every person present; you agree to abide by the social distancing and safety guidelines being practiced in our church; you consent to hold the church harmless against any damages or claims regarding your voluntary presence. If you are not able to agree to and affirm the above statements, you may not participate in our worship services in person and may choose to join online. Others who are advised to stay home; faithful who do not feel safe participating in services or attending them, small children who cannot remain close to a parent during services, and anyone who lives with or cares for someone who is currently sick, has not yet recovered, presents symptoms, or has tested positive for COVID-19. Attendance is first come, first served with restrictions on the total number of people in the Sanctuary. This includes Father Chrysostomos, chanters, ushers and parishioners. Holy Communion is offered to all who are present and are prepared and wish to receive.

3. Each individual is required to register. Attendance is recorded for purposes. Parishioners have the opportunity to register in advance to attend ANY service offered through the Sign-Up Genius link. Walk-Ins are accepted and will be registered upon arrival until 10:20 a.m. To Pre-Register to attend Divine Liturgy **[CLICK HERE](#)**. **WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO PRE-REGISTER THROUGH THE ONLINE LINK OR BY CALLING THE CHURCH OFFICE.** All social distancing guidelines remain in effect at all times with exception to families that live together. All worshipers should line up in a socially-distanced manner along the fence to be checked-in and admitted into the Church.
4. Masks are required. Gloves are recommended but optional. The church will **not** provide masks or gloves. Parishioners arriving without a mask, will be asked to return home. Hands must be sanitized upon entry into the sanctuary. Individuals with valid medical documentation, special needs, and children 10 and under do not need to wear masks.
5. No money can be exchanged. If you wish to make an offering for a votive candle (\$10) or for the tray, please bring your money or check in an envelope. Additionally, no handouts of paper materials are permitted. Seat cushions and Divine Liturgy books have been removed from the pews. Worshipers are welcome to use **silenced personal devices** to follow the Divine Liturgy.
6. Upon your arrival to the church, further guidance will be provided by the attending ushers. Certain areas of the church will be blocked from access and entry to the church will only be allowed via the designated front center door. Assigned seating will be designated with adequate spacing between households. It is not possible for clergy or ushers to make exceptions to any of these mandates, so please do not ask. Owing to the limitations on the number of people who may attend, we strongly encourage you to continue to experience the liturgies remotely with your loved ones via live streaming from our sister parish, the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity at **https://youtu.be/qV_SmW2TqsM**

For those who are unable to participate, don't worry, we are still praying for you and we will never cease asking God to bless our entire Parish and His world with every good thing.

We pray for an end to this pandemic and that we may all exercise patience and love with one another as we navigate these temporary though very difficult circumstances.

As we are praying for you, please pray for us.

Faithfully yours in Christ,



V. Rev. Father Chrysostomos Gilbert
Parish Priest



George J. Kostas
Parish Council President